

Mr. Chair, in Minnesota, we understand that the arts are an essential part of our economy and the number of jobs it creates.

The arts are so vital to our economy and our development and civic life that in 2008, Minnesotans voted to amend our state constitution to raise money, yes, to tax themselves, and dedicate part of the revenue to the arts.

Minnesota is the only state in the country where there is a dedicated public funding source for the arts.

In our constitution, Mr. Chair, we passed a legacy amendment. Hunters, anglers, conservation, parents, seniors, all came together to say the arts, along with preserving our environment, is integral to our legacy, to our way of life in Minnesota.

In my district alone, the arts employ over 8,000 people and the arts and the culture industry contributes over \$830 million to Minnesota's economy.

Investing in the arts makes economic sense and is good public policy. As been pointed out, for every dollar that is spent by the NEA, \$9 in economic activity is generated.

We must make tough choices given this fiscal crisis, and I believe the NEA's budget has been targeted and it has been shrunk enough. The NEA's budget has been cut 20% since 2010.

Our artists, poets, writers, musicians, producers, sculptors, singers, dancers, photographers, and actors contribute millions of dollars to our local economy and create a vibrant social space for us to come together, and we hear time and time again from the major corporations and from the start up companies, from computer companies to health care companies, to our universities that it is American creativity and space for the art that allows America to move forward.

So I strongly oppose this cut, and I reject any further attacks on the NEA's budget. Mr. Chairman, I yield back.